

Message Text

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UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 2125

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SF
SUBJECT: LABOR MINISTER PROMISES CHANGE

1. THE FOLLOWING REPORT OF A SPEECH IN BLOEMFONTEIN
BY LABOR MINISTER BOTHA APPEARED IN THE SEPTEMBER 7
EDITION OF THE RAND DAILY MAIL: QUOTE:
THE SCRAPPING OF JOB RESERVATION IS ALMOST CERTAIN
TO BE ONE OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
WIEHAHN COMMISSION, THE MINISTER OF LABOR SAID
YESTERDAY.
MR. FANIE BOTHA SAID HE WOULD HAVE " NO HESITATION"
IN ACCEPTING THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS.
ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL PARTY'S FREE STATE CONGRESS,
MR. BOTHA SAID THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS COULD
BE EXPECTED:
#THE SCRAPPING OF JOB RESERVATION.
#"A UNITARY SYSTEM" TO INCLUDE ALL RACES IN THE
BARGAINING PROCESS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND
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EMPLOYEES.
A SPECIAL LABOR COURT TO DEAL WITH LABOR DISPUTES.
A BODY - INCLUDING EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES AND LABOR EXPERTS -
TO HAVE A DIRECT HAND IN FORMULATING THE COUNTRY'S LABOR LEGISLATION.

THE WIEHAHN COMMISSION'S INTERIM REPORT IS DUE TO BE TABLED
NEXT MONTH.

MR. BOTHA SAID SOUTH AFRICA WAS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WITH A LAW TO MAINTAIN JOB RESERVATION. OTHER METHODS WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND TO PROTECT WORKERS, HE SAID.

THE SYSTEM OF WORKS COMMITTEES, TO PROVIDE LIAISON BETWEEN BLACK WORKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS HAD ALSO BECOME UNWIELDY DUE TO THE GREAT INCREASE IN THE NUMBERS OF BLACKS EMPLOYED IN FACTORIES.

ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT DIRECTLY REFER TO TRADE UNION RIGHTS FOR ALL RACES, MR. BOTHA SAID A " UNITARY SYSTEM" WOULD HAVE TO BE DEvised TO INCLUDE WORKERS OF ALL RACES IN THE BARGAINING PROCESS.

MR. BOTHA SAID SOUTH AFRICA COULD NOT IGNORE THE WORLD-WIDE LABOR MOVEMENT, AND HAD, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SET UP A BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

THE TASK OF THE BUREAU WAS TO KEEP CLOSE CONTACT WITH INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENTS AND HAD ON THREE PREVIOUS OCCASIONS SUCCESSFULLY THWARTED TRADE UNION ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE BOYCOTTS ON SOUTH AFRICA, HE SAID.

UNQUOTE.

2. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR FROM MINISTER BOTHA'S REMARKS THAT WHILE HE AND WIEHAHN FAVOR THE REMOVAL OF FORMAL STATUTORY JOB RESERVATION, BLACK WORKERS WILL STILL BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN FAVOR OF SKILLED WHITE

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WORKERS UNDER THE PROPOSED REVISIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S SYSTEM OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS. THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, WHICH WIEHAHN HEADS, IN THE S.A. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IS TO CONVINCE THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT THAT THE REMOVAL OF STATUTORY DISCRIMINATION JUSTIFIES THE RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION PRESSURE.

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